

Changes in Commuting Patterns Leads to New Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) Definitions

Based on commuting patterns developed from the 2000 Census many of the state's Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) will be changing their parish makeup.

The Louisiana Department of Labor publishes monthly statistics on the civilian labor force, employment, unemployment, and unemployment rate for the state, eight MSAs and all parishes. To be designated an MSA area, there must be at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more in population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting patterns.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) designates and defines MSAs following a set of official standards. The MSA classification is provided for use by Federal agencies in the production, analysis, and publication of data. With the new data derived from the 2000 Census of commuting patterns, the following changes will take place beginning with labor force and nonfarm data published for January 2005:

- The three current single parish MSAs will each gain an additional parish, the Alexandria MSA will represent Grant and Rapides; the Lake Charles MSA will have Calcasieu and Cameron; and the Monroe MSA will have Ouachita and Union parishes.
- The Baton Rouge MSA with the current parishes of Ascension, East and West Baton Rouge, and Livingston will gain Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, and East and West Feliciana.
- The Houma MSA with Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes will have no change.
- Lafayette MSA will lose Acadia and St. Landry parishes and include only Lafayette and St. Martin parishes.
- The New Orleans MSA will lose St. James parish and keep the remaining parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist and St. Tammany.
- The Shreveport-Bossier City MSA will lose Webster parish, but pick up DeSoto while keeping Bossier and Caddo parishes.

Additional information on the new MSA definitions can be found at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site at <http://stats.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm>.